

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00

NSC-05 SP-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /038 W

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O R 151730Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 371

INFO AMEMBASY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O M E 0 5 9 7

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TO

SUBJECT: FORMER GOT VICE PRESIDENT MEATCHI ARRESTED

1. SUMMARY: FORMER VICE PRESIDENT MEATCHI, ACCORDING TO UN-CONFIRMED REPORTS, WAS ARRESTED NIGHT PRESIDENT EYADEMA RETURNED FROM GUINEA, I.E. MARCH 10. MEATCHI FOUND IN POSSESSION SMALL ARMS. KEREKOU CONNECTION RUMORED. END SUMMARY

2. LAST EVENING (MARCH 14) GEORGE BROWN, GENERAL MANAGER LOME'S "HOTEL DE LA PAIX," GAVE ME REPORT HE HAD HEARD THAT GOT FORMER VICE PRESIDENT IDRISOU (ANTOINE) MEATCHI WAS ARRESTED NIGHT OF MARCH 10, SEVERAL HOURS FOLLOWING EYADEMA'S RETURN FROM GUINEA. MEALCHI, ACCORDING TO BROWN, HAD AROUSDD SUSPICION WHEN HE DID NOT APPEAR AT AIRPORT WELCOMING CEREMONIES FOR EYADEMA'S RETURN. SEARCH BY TOGOLESE AUTHORITIES (NOT CLEAR WHETHER MEATCHI'S HOME OR OFFICE) THEN REVEALED CACHE OF SMALL ARMS, INCLUDING HIGHPOWERED RIFLE WITH TELESCOPIC SIGHT. WHEN QUESTIONED, MEATCHI REPORTEDLY CLAIMED ISRAEL'S MOSHE DAYAN HAD

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GIVEN HIM RIFLE. BROWN MENTIONED RUMOR OF MEATCHI'S CONNECTION

WITH BENIN'S PRESIDENT KEREKOU.

3. THIS MORNING FORMER TOGOLESE AMBASSADOR TO US, EPIPHANE MAWUSSI, CALLED ON ME. HE HAD ACCEPTED INVITATION TO DINNER AT RESIDENCE OVER WEEKEND, BUT TELEPHONED AT LAST MINUTE TO SAY HE COULD NOT ATTEND AND WOULD COME TO EMBASSY INSTEAD. TODAY HE EXPLAINED HE HAD MET INFORMALLY ON SATURDAY WITH MINISTERS HUNLEDE, MIVEDOR AND DOGO, WHO HAD ADVISED HIM TO VISIT ME AT CHANCERY RATHER THAN RESIDENCE. MINISTERS HAD SAID IT WOULD BE ALRIGHT FOR MAWUSSI TO GO TO RESIDENCE ON HIS NEXT VISIT TO LOME, BUT NOT THIS WEEKEND.

4. I ASKED MAWUSSI WHETHER MINISOERS' ADVICE TO HIM HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH MEATCHI. HE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY, BUT SAID ONLY TO EXTENT IT MADE ATMOSPHERE LOME PARTICULARLY TENSE. MAWUSSI ALSO SAID MEATCHI IS BELIEVED TO HAVE HAD CONNECTION WITH KEREKOU. THERE IS NO RPT NO HINT, ACCORDING TO BOTH BROWN AND MAWUSSI, THAT USG (OR THIS EMBASSY) IS UNDER ANY SUSPICION OF CONNECTION WITH MEATCHI.

5. COMMENT: MEATCHI IS NORTHERNER (SOKODE) WHOSE MOTHER AT LEAST WAS KABEYE (CABRAIS), SAME TRIBE AS EYADEMA'S. HE SERVED AS VICE PRESIDENT 1963-66 UNDER GRUNITZKY. MEATCHI WAS DROPPED FROM POST IN GOVERNMENT EARLY LAST YEAR WHEN MINISTRY RURAL ECONOMY, IN WHICH HE HAD SERVED SINCE EYADEMA TOOK POWER, SPLIT INTO TWO MINISTRIES.
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